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# PREGNANT DAUGHTER

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Although there is no longer a stigma attached to having children as a single Mum, it can be a shock for parents when they are told their daughter is pregnant. This is even more so if their daughter is still a teenager.

All sorts of concerns go whizzing through your mind. What about her career? How will she manage to look after the baby? Will we, as parents, have to step in and rear this child? How will she cope with the birth?

Whatever the immediate reaction is, it is most important to try to begin to deal with the situation calmly and rationally. Jumping in with lots of criticism isn't going to help and will only serve to make the girl feel she has let everyone down at a time when she too is trying to adjust to the fact that she is to become a mother.

She needs to make sure she is getting all the right medical care and that there are discussions with the school about managing her work. She needs to be helped to plan ahead and consider all the implications of having the baby. There will be issues about the father of the child - depending on the circumstances. As this can often be contentious it is best for parents to do a lot of listening and thinking before putting in their two-pence worth. She needs to make decisions which are right for her. However she also needs to bear in mind how important it is that children have the support and love of their father, - unless there are very good reasons not to.

## Q

**Our daughter has just told us she is six months pregnant. She is 23 and wants the baby adopted as she says she is a career woman and doesn't want children at the moment. We are really devastated that she is going to give away our grandchild.**

## A

This is a really sad situation for you all. You probably anticipated that the arrival of your grandchild would be a happy time but now that is not going to happen.

Your daughter has the right to make her own mind up. She believes that her decision to have the baby adopted will be best for her and the baby. What is most important is that she will have the opportunity to think through all the options and their consequences with someone emotionally independent before the birth. She will also have other chances to consider the steps following the birth and at each stage along the adoption process until it is finalised. Contacting Social Services will give her all the information and guidance she should need. As her parents, you need to take your courage in both hands, be as supportive as you can and respect her decision as you would wish her to respect any major decision you would make.

